177 Housing and village improvement: The changes in this aspect of culture
are capable of fairly precise description, which has been provided in
Table 10.A This table applies to Sivepe only; I shall refer to some
minor differences between Sivepe and Inonda at the end of this section.
335 The changes may be analysed into several main types. First, there is
412 the extent to which European materials and tools are used. Here, we note
177 that nails were a building material as early as 1951 (and therefore
also hammers), but a significant change has been the extent of their
use. The introduction of nails was partly a time-saving device, as
framing can be efficiently lashed together with the bark fibres
traditionally used. On the other hand, the "timber" walls might not
be easy to lash together and nails are probably necessary here. On
the other hand, the blackpalm or betelnut which is used for the floors
does not take nails at all well and the lashing is a superior technique,
177 used in almost all the houses. Secondly, there have been changes in
342 house design, and the use of materials. The increase in house size,
which was the most striking of the innovations, was general throughout
the village, according to a standard set by the leader and adhered to
by everybody. The change from betelnut to blackpalm flooring is
towards a superior, toughter material, harder to work and comparatively
rare in the Sasembata district. The change from sago to "timber"
walls was purely a matter of aesthetic fashion. I was told by Mr.
Sebire that it started in the early 1950's in the Kokoda district; in
Sasembata district it does not seem to have started until around 1965.
The new houses at the mission station had "timber" walls; so had the
new houses in several other nearby villages. Sivepe, being built on
a new site after the fashion started was wholly built in "timber"
(except for a few houses shifted from the old site and standing on the
new one and gradually replaced). The "timber" looks like weatherboard,
[335] which has been used on Australian houses in the Kokoda district. It
is cut from logs sawed to a length of six feet, which are then split
into shingles with a bushknife, a procedure which takes much time and
skill. The six feet long shingles are generally 3/8 inch thick and
five inches wide. The intention is to overlap them, providing better
protection against wind and rain than the sago walls have. The work of
cutting the shingles is so arduous, however, that the overlap is usually
quite small when the houses are built; as the logs are split green, the
timber shrinks until cracks appear between the boards.

177 The third type of change is that actually advocated by European
[342] authorities. (The timber walls, according to administration officers,
were a purely Orokaiva idea.) For reasons of hygiene, the administration
wanted the houses to have windows, which traditionally they did not
have. The new houses have large windows, but they are all blocked up
with boards (to keep the wind and rain out) so that they are not functional,
[36 except in warding off criticism from Australian officials. The village
improvement measures: elimination of pigs, lavatories, rubbish holes,
[351] pens for chickens; are all based on European advocacy. The neat lines
of crotons and other shrubs, which are beginning to form a standard

A [See Cat. 116, p. 215--Analyst]

177 based, is alien and seems dubious to Orokaiva. The Europeans claim
245 that a plant needs to be looked after even if it contains no spirit;
249 to the Orokaiva this appears absurd.
[824] Some Orokaiva have been employed by Europeans as carpenters;
these men have certain skills upon which a community draws when large
community buildings (for instance, the hospital at Sasembata mission
177 station) need to be constructed. The trained carpenter leads such
335 enterprises in the role of expert. There was one such man in Sasembata
village; he, like most others of his type, learned his skill in
European employment and not in one of the small adult education
ventures which the administration has sponsored from time to time (the
adult education classes at Ilimo camp were probably the first of this
type).

177 For the rest, the skills acquired by Orokaiva over the last 15
871 years are largely concerned not directly with village development but
rather with an increase of understanding of the world outside. While
before the war, only a small minority had school education, the
Anglican Mission spread its operations to several new stations,
including Sasembata, after the war. After the eruption, the scope of
education was again greatly extended and it could be said that the
eruption marked the beginning of universal school education in the
majority of Orokaiva villages. The Sasembata station began to draw
virtually the entire child population of the surrounding villages,
and most students now follow a five or six year course. While this
development had been planned ever since the war, it may be significant
that regular school attendance of all the villages in the district
was experienced for the first time at Ilimo, where a school was
conducted for the whole evacuee child population, and adult classes
as well. It is the objective of present school programmes, as far
as I can see, to make the population literate and the increase of
[212] literacy is a major aspect of acculturation over the period. Literacy
has certainly progressed to a point where letters written in Orokaiva
to any family in Sivepe can be read and understood with the help of
at least a junior member of the family; and can be replied to. While
177 I could see no evidence that people have acquired mathematical knowledge
802 of any sophistication, I was struck by a strong quantitative orientation.
In the Orokaiva language, there are no numerals higher than 2; hence,
it is the invariable practise to use English numerals when speaking
[192] the Orokaiva language. The numerals are, in fact, among the main
English linguistic features that have been borrowed. They are used
with remarkable frequency; the number of coffee trees, the value in
pounds of trade goods included in a bride price, the calculation of
money prices, even the number of brothers or men who together played
some role in a mythological tale (a distinctly contemporary touch,
this)--all these phenomena show that "numbers" have become an integral
part of Orokaiva culture. The Orokaiva use the English word "number"
177 for a variety of quantitative concepts, including price. Finally, one
829 must regard as an aspect of acculturation, the introduction of many